



AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION
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Amendments in the Claims

Claim listing pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c). This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A device for processing slaughtered animals or parts thereof, having a first and a second station, comprising:

a. a transfer conveyor which extends between the first station and the second station and which comprises at least one substantially stationary slot with a width, a course, a supply end and a discharge end, which at least one slot comprises a first opening at the supply end of the slot and a second opening at the discharge end of the slot, wherein the slot is designed to carry and support slaughtered animals or parts;

b. supply means for optionally supplying at the first station slaughtered animals or parts thereof from a first conveyor to the at least one slot of the transfer conveyor, wherein the supply means are adapted to control which slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the group of slaughtered animals or parts on the first conveyor are supplied ~~into the slot~~ to the transfer conveyor, and which slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the group of slaughtered animals or parts on the first conveyor are not supplied ~~into the slot~~ to the transfer conveyor;

c. discharge means for discharging the slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the at least one slot of the transfer conveyor at the second station; and

d. at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the selected slaughtered animals or parts thereof which are situated in the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the width of the at least one slot.

2. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one driving member can adopt a first position and a second position, in which the slaughtered animals or parts thereof can and cannot, respectively, be moved from the first station towards the second station.
3. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one driving member can rotate about an axis which is substantially perpendicular to the path covered by the at least one driving member.
4. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one driving member comprises at least one arm which is designed to transmit the movement of the at least one driving member to the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.
5. (Original) The device of claim 2, comprising force means which exert a force on the at least one driving member, which force opposes the movement of the at least one driving member from the first position towards the second position.
6. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the force means comprise spring means.
7. (Original) The device of claim 5, wherein the force means comprise a controllable piston-cylinder device.
8. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein the piston/cylinder device can make the at least one driving member adopt any desired position between the first position and the second position.
9. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 1, wherein the discharge means are designed to selectively discharge the slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the at least one slot.

10. (Original) The device of claim 9, wherein the supply means comprise a switching mechanism which can be moved into a first switched position and a second switched position, in which the slaughtered animals or parts thereof are and are not, respectively, supplied to the at least one slot.

11. (Original) The device of claim 9, wherein the supply means and/or the discharge means are controlled by supply-control means and discharge-control means on the basis of data relating to the slaughtered animals or parts thereof to be transferred.

12. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the supply means and/or the discharge means comprise at least one disc which is driven in rotation and is designed to supply or remove the slaughtered animals or parts thereof one by one to or from the at least one slot, and which is provided on its circumference with at least one holding slot which opens out on the outer circumference of the at least one rotatably driven disc and is designed to carry and support at least one slaughtered animal or part of a slaughtered animal.

13. (Original) The device of claim 12, wherein the at least one rotatably driven disc has at least two holding slots.

14. (Original) The device of claim 12, wherein the at least one rotatably driven disc of the discharge means transfers the slaughtered animals or parts thereof into a stationary waiting slot.

15. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one slot extends substantially in a horizontal plane.

16. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the at least one slot has a substantially curved course.

17. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein the at least one slot has a substantially straight course.

18. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein an unloading device is provided inside the slot.

19. (Original) The device of claim 18, wherein the unloading device is designed to locally widen the at least one slot.

20. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 19, wherein the unloading device comprises a support member which defines a section of the at least slot and can move substantially transversely with respect to the course of the slot, for locally increasing the width of the slot.

21. (Original) The device of claim 18, wherein unloading-control means are provided for controlling the unloading device.

22. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 21, wherein a weighing device is incorporated in the at least one slot for weighting the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

23. (Original) The device of claims 22, wherein the unloading-control means record the weight of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof which has been detected by the weighing device and control the unloading device on the basis of this data.

24. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein a processing device is provided along the course of the at least one slot, for processing the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

25. (Original) The device of claim 24, wherein the processing device comprises at least one frictional surface which is arranged along the at least one slot and is designed to act on part of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

26. (Original) The device of claim 25, wherein the frictional surface forms part of a driven conveyor belt.

27. (Original) The device of claim 26, wherein the processing device comprises two driven conveyor belts which are arranged on either side of the at least one slot, for clamping a part of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof between them.

28. (Original) The device of claim 26, wherein the processing device comprises at least two driven conveyor belts which are arranged one behind the other along the at least one slot.

29. (Original) The device of claim 27, wherein the direction of movement of a first conveyor belt differs from that of a second conveyor belt.

30. (Original) The device of claim 27, wherein the speed of movement of a first conveyor belt differs from that of a second conveyor belt.

31. (Currently Amended) A device for processing slaughtered animals or parts thereof, having a first and a second station, comprising:

a. a conveyor which extends between the first station and the second station and which comprises at least one substantially stationary slot with a width, a course, a supply end and a discharge end, which at least one slot comprises a first opening at the supply end of the slot and a second opening at the discharge end of the slot, wherein the slot is designed to carry and support the slaughtered animals or parts thereof;

b. supply means for supplying at the first station the slaughtered animals or parts in the at least one slot of the conveyor;

c. discharge means for discharging the slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the at least one slot in the conveyor, wherein the discharge means are controlled by discharge-control means to discharge the slaughtered animals or parts from the at least one slot at a controllable rate which is independent from the rate with which the slaughtered animals or parts are ~~supplied to the at least one slot~~ conveyed by the transfer conveyor; and

d. at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the slaughtered animals or parts thereof which are situated in the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the width of the at least one slot.

32. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one driving member can adopt a first position and a second position, in which the slaughtered animals or parts thereof can and cannot, respectively, be moved from the first station towards the second station.

33. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one driving member can rotate about an axis which is substantially perpendicular to the path covered by the at least one driving member.

34. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one driving member comprises at least one arm which is designed to transmit the movement of the at least one driving member to the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

35. (Previously added) The device of claim 32, comprising force means which exert a force on the at least one driving member, which force opposes the movement of the at least one driving member from the first position towards the second position.

36. (Previously added) The device of claim 35, wherein the force means comprise spring means.

37. (Previously added) The device of claim 35, wherein the force means comprise a controllable piston-cylinder device.

38. (Previously added) The device of claim 37, wherein the piston/cylinder device can make the at least one driving member adopt any desired position between the first position and the second position.

39. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein the supply means comprise a switching mechanism which can be moved into a first switched position and a second switched position, in which the slaughtered animals or parts thereof are and are not, respectively, supplied to the at least one slot.

40. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein the supply means and/or the discharge means are controlled by supply-control means and discharge-control means on the basis of data relating to the slaughtered animals or parts thereof to be transferred.

41. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein the supply means and/or the discharge means comprise at least one disc which is driven in rotation and is designed to supply or remove the slaughtered animals or parts thereof one by one to or from the at least one slot, and which is provided on its circumference with at least one holding slot which opens out on the

outer circumference of the at least one rotatably driven disc and is designed to carry and support at least one slaughtered animal or part of a slaughtered animal.

42. (Previously added) The device of claim 41, wherein the at least one rotatably driven disc has at least two holding slots.

43. (Previously added) The device of claim 41, wherein the at least one rotatably driven disc of the discharge means transfers the slaughtered animals or parts thereof into a stationary waiting slot.

44. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one slot extends substantially in a horizontal plane.

45. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one slot has a substantially curved course.

46. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein the at least one slot has a substantially straight course.

47. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein an unloading device is provided inside the slot.

48. (Previously added) The device of claim 47, wherein the unloading device is designed to locally widen the at least one slot.

49. (Previously added) The device of claim 48, wherein the unloading device comprises a support member which defines a section of the at least slot and can move substantially transversely with respect to the course of the slot, for locally increasing the width of the slot.

50. (Previously added) The device of claim 47, wherein unloading-control means are provided for controlling the unloading device.

51. (Previously added) The device of claim 50, wherein a weighing device is incorporated in the at least one slot for weighting the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

52. (Previously added) The device of claims 51, wherein the unloading-control means record the weight of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof which has been detected by the weighing device and control the unloading device on the basis of this data.

53. (Previously added) The device of claim 31, wherein a processing device is provided along the course of the at least one slot, for processing the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

54. (Previously added) The device of claim 53, wherein the processing device comprises at least one frictional surface which is arranged along the at least one slot and is designed to act on part of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof.

55. (Previously added) The device of claim 54, wherein the frictional surface forms part of a driven conveyor belt.

56. (Previously added) The device of claim 55, wherein the processing device comprises two driven conveyor belts which are arranged on either side of the at least one slot, for clamping a part of the slaughtered animals or parts thereof between them.

57. (Previously added) The device of claim 55, wherein the processing device comprises at least two driven conveyor belts which are arranged one behind the other along the at least one slot.

58. (Previously added) The device of claim 56, wherein the direction of movement of a first conveyor belt differs from that of a second conveyor belt.

59. (Currently Amended) A device for processing a slaughtered animal or part thereof, having a first and a second station, comprising:

a. a conveyor which extends between the first station and the second station and which comprises at least one substantially stationary slot with a width, a course, a supply end and a discharge end, which at least one slot comprises a first opening at the supply end of the slot and a second opening at the discharge end of the slot, wherein the slot is designed to carry and support the slaughtered animal or part thereof;

b. supply means for supplying at the first station the slaughtered animal or part thereof in the at least one slot of the conveyor;

c. discharge means for discharging the slaughtered animals or parts thereof from the at least one slot in the conveyor, wherein the discharge means are located ~~between the first and~~ at the second opening of the slot at the second station, and wherein the discharge means are controllable, allowing the discharge means to controllably adopt a first position wherein the slaughtered animal or part thereof is conveyed in the slot toward the second opening, and allowing the discharge means to controllably adopt a second position wherein the slaughtered animal or part thereof is removed from the slot; and

d. at least one driving member which passes through a path which is substantially parallel to the course of the at least one slot and is designed to move the slaughtered animal or part thereof which is situated in the at least one slot along the at least one slot from the first station towards the second station, wherein the at least one driving member spans at least half the width of the at least one slot.